# Clarification: RFK & Fidel

Wash Post Mag 1/14/79

Michael Ewing of Washington challenges my Nov. 6 assertion that Robert Kennedy was in charge of plots to overthrow or assassinate Fidel Castro while Kennedy was attorney general. In fact, Gen. Edward Lansdale was chief of operations of a program called MON GOOSE, which grew out of the Bay of Pigs failure. RFK, according to Senate testimony, played an active role in that group and whether he had knowledge of assassination plans against Castro or not is a matter of continuing debate.

During a January 1962 meeting in RFK's office, one assistant took notes that contained the following passage he attributed to RFK: ". . . a solution to the Cuban problem today carried top priority in the U.S. government. No time, money, effort or manpower is to be spared. Yesterday . . . the president had indicated to him that the final chapter had not been written—it's got to be done and will be done."

Richard Helms, then director of the CIA, told the Senate that those words reflected the "kind of atmosphere" in which he had perceived that assassination was implicitly authorized. By the same token, Helms' executive assistant—who took the notes at that meeting—agreed that RFK was "very vehement in his speech" and "really wanted action," but he disagreed with his boss that assassination was an implied option. Historians and journalists are still debating whether the Kennedys knew of (and condoned) the CIA's dealings with members of organized crime regarding the attempts to kill Castro.